

## **Strengthening Public Safety and First Responders in Indiana**

### **Executive Summary**

Indiana communities depend on reliable policing, responsive fire services, and prompt EMS support. However, many departments across the state face growing call volumes, increasing operational costs, staffing shortages, and aging equipment. Public safety is not optional — it is the core responsibility of government. When families call 911, they deserve confident assurance that help will arrive quickly, professionally, and fully equipped.

This document outlines why Indiana must prioritize increased support for public safety agencies and first responders, and how doing so protects lives, strengthens communities, and ensures safer neighborhoods without unnecessary bureaucracy or waste.

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### **Background: The Indiana Public Safety Reality**

Indiana is growing, and so are the demands on its first responders:

- Police departments face rising responsibilities ranging from violent crime response to mental-health related calls to fentanyl-driven emergencies.
- Fire departments handle broader all-hazard response — fires, medical calls, hazardous incidents, disasters, and rescue operations.
- EMS agencies serve as the frontline of life-saving medical response, often bridging gaps in rural and suburban medical access.

In many communities, especially outside major metro areas, departments must do **more with less**, while expectations from citizens are understandably higher than ever.

Recruitment is more challenging, training requirements are greater, and modern emergency readiness requires **modern tools, equipment, and sustained funding stability**.

Indiana families should not have to wonder if help will arrive on time.

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### **Problem Statement**

While Indiana law enforcement and emergency services are staffed by dedicated, honorable professionals, many face:

- Staffing shortages and retention problems
- Budget pressures that delay equipment upgrades

- Longer response times in certain communities
- Increased strain due to population changes and complex emergencies

When budgets lag behind reality, public safety suffers. When response times increase, lives are at risk. When agencies are forced to operate under outdated conditions, communities become vulnerable.

This is not theoretical — it is real, measurable, and solvable.

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## **Policy Position**

I assert the following principle:

**Indiana must prioritize sustainable, responsible investment in law enforcement, fire departments, and EMS to ensure safer neighborhoods and reliable emergency response for every Hoosier.**

This policy does not mean reckless spending.

It means investing wisely where it saves lives, prevents crime, and strengthens communities.

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## **Key Policy Pillars**

### **1. Ensure Stable and Sufficient Funding**

Public safety must be treated as essential infrastructure. Agencies need predictable funding to retain talent, upgrade equipment, and maintain readiness without waiting for crisis-driven approvals.

### **2. Support Recruitment and Retention**

Indiana must remain competitive in attracting and keeping qualified officers, firefighters, and paramedics. Communities cannot afford understaffed agencies or burnout-driven attrition.

### **3. Improve Response Times**

Every minute matters. Faster response means fewer deaths, safer neighborhoods, and stronger trust between citizens and their government.

### **4. Equip First Responders with Modern Tools**

Outdated radios, vehicles past service life, worn protective gear, and insufficient technology put both responders and citizens at risk. Modern equipment saves lives.

## **5. Strengthen Training and Readiness**

High standards, consistent readiness, and ongoing professional training ensure emergency response remains disciplined, capable, and prepared for modern threats and crises.

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### **Supporting Rationale**

#### **Public Safety is the First Duty of Government**

Government's primary responsibility is to protect life, liberty, and property. When a community cannot rely on safe streets or responsive emergency services, everything else collapses.

#### **Investment Prevents Greater Costs Later**

Failing to support public safety leads to:

- Higher crime
- Greater property loss
- Increased insurance and municipal costs
- Erosion of community stability and economic confidence

Supporting first responders is not just morally right — it is fiscally responsible.

#### **Safer Communities Strengthen Families and Local Economies**

Businesses, families, schools, and churches thrive where safety is dependable. Strong public safety environments attract investment, stabilize neighborhoods, and support family life.

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### **Policy Outcomes and Benefits**

By prioritizing funding and support for public safety and first responders, Indiana will:

- Reduce emergency response times
- Strengthen crime prevention and rapid intervention
- Protect life and property more effectively
- Improve morale and professionalism among responders
- Reinforce Hoosier confidence in their communities and leadership

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## **Conclusion**

Indiana's police officers, firefighters, and EMS responders do not ask for recognition first — they ask for the tools, training, staffing, and support necessary to protect the public effectively.

I will stand firmly for safer neighborhoods, stronger emergency preparedness, and **on-time emergency response for every Hoosier family**. Public safety is not an afterthought. It is a responsibility, a priority, and a promise.

**When Hoosiers call for help, help must come — fully prepared, fully funded, and without delay.**

That is leadership.

That is responsibility.

That is what Indiana deserves.